

Commission on Civics Education
Monday, February 26, 2007
The Science Museum of Virginia
Richmond, Virginia
10 a.m.

Meeting Summary

The Commission on Civics Education, established by House Bill 1769 as an advisory commission in the executive branch of state government, held its fifth meeting on February 26, 2007.

Members Present

Thomas C. Coen
Dr. Sheila G. Hill
The Honorable William Roscoe Reynolds
J. Westwood Smithers, Jr.
Ginger Stanley
Richard C. Sullivan, Jr.
The Honorable Robert Tata
Kathryn Williams

Members Absent

The Honorable Kenneth C. Alexander
Carmela C. Bills
Dr. Stephen G. Bragaw
The Honorable James H. Dillard, II
Glen H. Hoptman
The Honorable Frederick M. Quayle
The Honorable Beverly J. Sherwood
Kenneth S. Stroupe, Jr.
The Honorable R. Lee Ware, Jr.

Other Persons in Attendance

Agnes Dunn
Doug Pond
Michael Wildasin

Ex-Officio Present

Dr. Linda Wallinger (Designee for Dr.
Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.)

Ex-Officio Absent

Dr. Mark E. Emblidge
Jean Bankos (Designee for The
Honorable Timothy M. Kaine)
Jeremy Greenfield (Designee for The
Honorable Bill Bolling)
David E. Johnson (Designee for The
Honorable Robert F. McDonnell)
Dr. Barbara A. Perry

Department of Education

Betsy Barton
Dr. Beverly Thurston

Welcome

The Honorable Robert Tata called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. and completed the roll call. The minutes from the December 4, 2006, meeting of the Commission on Civics Education were approved.

Presentations and Discussions

Richard Sullivan:

- Relayed an apology from the Honorable James H. Dillard for his absence due to inclement weather.
- Relayed “profound gratitude and appreciation” from Mr. Dillard to the Subcommittee for Instruction and Curriculum for its work on proposed modifications to the *History and Social Science Standards of Learning*.

Michael Wildasin:

- Introduced the work of the Subcommittee for Instruction and Curriculum in proposing modifications to the *History and Social Science Standards of Learning* that emphasize active learning, local government, and service learning for civics.
- Referred to Dr. Peter Stearns’ call for an “infusion” of civics throughout the social studies curricula.
- Suggested a different approach to skills as a method for encouraging a more active approach to social studies.

Agnes Dunn:

- Presented the proposed changes for grade levels or courses from kindergarten through grade seven.
- Asked Mr. Wildasin to explain the new historical thinking skills that have been suggested for Virginia Studies and most classes taught above the fourth grade level.
- Explained the reason for several vocabulary changes.

Commission members voiced opinions about the need for including additional geography skills. Concern was expressed about how early to introduce some of the more difficult economics concepts such as taxes or issues related to immigration. There was also discussion of a number of different historically relevant people and places that deserved inclusion. Some of the proposed additions appeared to commission members to be difficult to assess.

Michael Wildasin:

- Presented the proposed changes for courses from eighth through twelfth grade.
- Explained how the historical thinking skills being proposed would enhance the way in which courses are taught.

There were many questions about the availability of instructional materials for teachers. Commission members wanted to know how:

- Teachers use the *History and Social Science Standards of Learning* to teach.
- Textbooks cover the *History and Social Science Standards of Learning*.
- Resources are provided for less experienced teachers.

Dr. Linda Wallinger:

- Responded that the work of the subcommittee is a draft and not a finished or official document.
- Pointed out that many groups will review the proposed modifications before implementation.
- Stated that the Curriculum Framework for each course defines the content knowledge, skills, and understandings that are measured by the *Standards of Learning* tests.
- Reviewed the Timeline for the Review of *History and Social Science Standards of Learning*.

Doug Pond (Publisher's Representative):

- Pointed out that textbook companies will need time to customize instructional materials for the 2008 *History and Social Science Standards of Learning*.
- Further elaborated that companies will need eighteen months to complete research for in-depth coverage in Virginia.

There was additional discussion related to encouraging active hands-on learning and service learning as ways of developing post secondary skills. Team or student-centered learning, as applied to civics, was seen as a means to promote day-to-day skills for employment in the workforce. The Honorable Robert Tata called for a vote on the proposals as amended by the commission, and they were passed unanimously. Delegate Tata thanked the members of the Subcommittee for Instruction and Curriculum for their contribution to the *History and Social Science Standards of Learning* process.

Adjournment

The Honorable Robert Tata adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.